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Implementation of the resolutions of the United Nations

Review of the implementation of the Declaration on the Strengthening on International Security

Letter dated 31 May 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Lithuania to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to enclose herewith the Vilnius Statement. The document was signed by the seven Ministers for Foreign Affairs and two Deputy Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the respective Central European countries on 19 May 2000 at Vilnius (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 57 and 84.

(*Signed*) Gediminas **Šerkšnys**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 31 May 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Lithuania to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Vilnius Statement

We have gathered today in Vilnius to demonstrate our solidarity and commitment to the creation of a Europe whole and free in an alliance including the countries of Europe, the United States and Canada as the foundation for stability and security in the twenty-first century.

We subscribe to the fundamental and common values of the Euro-Atlantic community, including a belief in individual liberty, the free market and the rule of law. We not only share these values but consider ourselves to have contributed to their development in Europe over the centuries. Our desire to integrate into the institutions of the Euro-Atlantic community emanates from our readiness to assume our fair share of responsibility for the common defence and to add our voice to the debate on our common future. Having experienced the consequences of political indifference towards the fate of others far too often in our own history, we are committed to defend these values in order to contribute to freedom and peace.

We recognize that security for Europe and North America lies in maintaining a strong transatlantic alliance. Today, we reaffirm our commitment to the completion of the historic project of a Europe whole and free. In this regard, we welcome the contribution of the newest members of the Alliance, Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary as an important step in achieving this vision. Their membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization has enhanced European stability and contributed significantly to the military strength and political cohesion of NATO.

We are not only prepared for the responsibilities and burdens of NATO membership today, but we are already coordinating our defence structures and policies with the Alliance and contributing to NATO political and military undertakings. Furthermore, we remain committed to practical and political efforts to further improve the specific qualifications of our countries, including implementation of the Membership Action Plan. While each country should be considered on its own merits, we believe that the integration of each democracy will be a success for us all and the integration of all our countries will be a success for Europe and NATO.

We welcome the commitment by NATO Heads of State at the Washington Summit that the transatlantic link remains as important for our future as it has been in the past and that NATO will remain the institution of choice when Europe and the United States decide to act together. The Alliance remains the foundation of the collective defence of its members and must be capable of addressing both current and future threats to our common values through crisis management.

We also welcome the commitment of the European Union to build a Common European Security and Defense Policy that fulfils Europe's aspirations and strengthens the transatlantic link, and we are ready to contribute to those efforts. We recognize that NATO and the European Union are the two central foundations of the Euro-Atlantic community and that we must pursue accession in both institutions if we are to fully reintegrate our democracies into the community we share. We recognize that these aspirations are complementary, and we are committed to pursuing both objectives in parallel.

We are determined to contribute to the efforts of the European Union as well as NATO missions. The stabilization, reconstruction and integration of South-East Europe into the European mainstream is in our common interest. Therefore, we pledge our continued support for the efforts of the international community to restore stability in the Western Balkans.

We are firmly convinced that the integration of our democracies into NATO and the European Union will facilitate the creation of a free, prosperous and undivided Europe. Today, we reiterate our common commitment to work together cooperatively to achieve this goal. Our goal will not be reached until each of us, as well as other European democracies sharing the values of the Euro-Atlantic community and able to bear its common responsibilities, has been fully integrated into these institutions. We call upon the member States of NATO to fulfil the promise of the Washington Summit to build a Europe whole and free. We call upon

the member States at the next NATO Summit in 2002 to invite our democracies to join NATO.

Vilnius, 19 May 2000

For Albania
Xhufi **Pellumb**
Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs

For Bulgaria
Nadezhda **Mihailova**
Minister for Foreign Affairs

For Estonia
Toomas Hendrik **Ilves**
Minister for Foreign Affairs

For Latvia
Indulis **Bērziņš**
Minister for Foreign Affairs

For Lithuania
Algirdas **Saudargas**
Minister for Foreign Affairs

For Macedonia
Nikola **Dimitrov**
Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs

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Petre **Roman**
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For Slovakia
Eduard **Kukan**
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